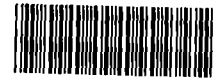


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Barrel cleanup concerns School Street neighbors

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EPA

MIDDLETON — School Street residents who live near the site of an environmental cleanup said federal officials still haven't told them what exactly is going on in their neighborhood.

On Jan. 11, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency began removing 500 barrels believed to contain chemicals related to adhesives manufacturing from an abandoned building at the American Glue and Resin site at 40 School St.

Officials have said there's no need for residents to be overly concerned; they're removing the barrels to avoid a potential hazard.

The barrels are deteriorating and some contain chemicals that are flammable.

But neighbors said they've received no official information about the cleanup and have some

questions.

"We've gotten no notification," said Donna Butler, who has been living at 48 School St. for 26 years.

"We drive by every day and take a look," said Jeanne Beattie, a concerned neighbor.

Erin Heskett, an EPA community involvement coordinator, said fact sheets about the project have been mailed out recently to residents on streets surrounding the site.

The EPA plans to test the barrels' contents, properly repackage any hazardous materials, and dispose or reuse the contents at an EPA-approved facility.

The EPA's notification sheet also asks that the community help with the cleanup effort by warning children and others not to enter the building.

"The hazardous substances inside of the building could pose health risks to persons who come into direct contact with them," states the EPA document.

Superfund Records Center

SITE: American Glue

BREAK: 12.3

OTHER: 46 96 51

35

Site records show the barrels contain toluene, acetone and phosphoric acid, according to the EPA. Some of the barrels are not labelled, the agency said.

Some neighbors wondered yesterday why the cleanup has taken so many years.

Health Agent Leo Cormier said the town, not having the resources or the expertise for the cleanup, referred the case to the state's Department of Environmental Protection in the 1980s.

Town administrator Ira Singer said that was the appropriate course of action and noted the town can not set the time line for a state agency.

"They move at their own pace. That's always been clear," he said. Stephen Roberson, the DEP's project manager, said his agency worked with the Auterio family, who owns the property, for years to initiate cleanup efforts.

"I would see the owners over there cleaning up bits at a time

(over the years)," said Sharon Ferraro, a resident at 41 School St.

Ultimately, the DEP referred the matter to the EPA last September when it became clear property owners didn't have the resources to remove all the barrels.

"We recommended an action in October. That's a three month turn around," Heskett said.

As far as she's concerned, Butler said the bottom line is the barrels, some of which contain flammables, have not gone anywhere.

She said she thinks the town had an obligation to solve the problem sooner.

"Ten years of cooperation does not satisfy that next door to me there's a tinderbox," she said.

Heskett said anyone with questions can call him at (617) 918-1054.

Patricia Auterio, who is responsible for paying taxes on the 3.2-acre property, could not be reached for comment.